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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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BELTSVILLE SMALL WHITE TURKEYS
APPEAR ON MANY RETAIL MARKETS

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This year, for the first time, the Beltsville Small White turkey will appear in large numbers on retail markets throughout the country. The number of these birds now being made ready for the holiday trade is estimated at 2,000,000.

The Beltsville Small White turkey has a compact body, with a moderately long keel bone and plenty of meat, especially on the breast and legs. The legs and neck are somewhat shorter in proportion to body size than those of the older types. At market age, the hens weigh $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 pounds, alive; $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 pounds, dressed; and $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 pounds, full-drawn. The toms weigh 12 to 17 pounds, alive; $10\frac{1}{2}$ to 15 pounds, dressed; and 9 to 13 pounds, full-drawn. This new-type turkey reaches market age in four weeks less time than the larger types. Also it is a good layer, thus speeding up its propagation.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture started its new-type poultry breeding program in 1934 to meet a growing demand for turkeys that would fit modern small ovens and small-family tables better than the large birds then available. By crossing standard varieties - principally the Bronze and White Holland, with admixtures of the Black, wild, and White Austrian - the Department poultry breeders succeeded in developing a turkey that met their specifications in about six years. Within the next four years they fixed the type more definitely and produced several hundred birds having the desired characteristics. To hasten its propagation, the Department at first distributed hatching eggs and poult among cooperating State agencies, which, in turn, made further distribution to experienced turkey breeders. Later, sales were made directly to the commercial breeders. Thus the stock has been built up to the large numbers now available for the 1948 holiday season.

These pictures show some of the breeds from which the new-type turkey descended and some of the experimental birds on the poultry range at the Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md.

(OVER)



Picture Story No. 57-c Beltsville Small White Turkey

(EDITORS AND WRITERS: You may obtain 8x10 glossy prints of any of the pictures here shown free on request to Press Service, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.)

In developing the new-type Beltsville Small White turkey, poultry breeders of the U. S. Department of Agriculture used principally the Bronze and White Holland varieties, with admixtures of wild, Black, and White Austrian.

(1) They selected Broad-breasted Bronze to provide good fleshing of breast and legs

(2) Charlevoix, or Canadian small-type, Bronze, to provide small size, early maturity, and good egg hatchability

(3) White Holland, to provide white color and good egg production

(4) Black, to provide good egg hatchability

(5) Wild turkey, to provide small size and good egg hatchability

(6) White Austrian, to provide small size, white color, good breast fleshing, and early maturity.

(7) This Beltsville Small White tom weighed 15 pounds at its market age of 24 weeks.

(8) The hen weighed 9 pounds at the same market age.

(9) When full-drawn, the Beltsville Small White turkey tom weighs 9 to 13 pounds; the hen, $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 pounds.

(10) Brooder house for new-type turkeys on the poultry range at the Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md.

(11) A family of new-type turkeys in a breeding pen at the Center.

(12) A small experimental flock of new-type turkeys at the Center.

(13) S. J. Marsden, in charge of turkey investigations, holds Beltsville Small White turkey No. G-830.

(14) He holds representatives of the two principal breeds - White Holland hen (left) and Bronze tom (center) - used in developing the new type and a Beltsville Small White hen (right).

(15) He holds dressed representative of large and small turkey breeds - a Beltsville Small White hen (left) and a Broad Breasted Bronze hen.